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The International Relations of the Chinese Empire. By H. B. Morse.
The Period of Conflict. New York and London: Longmans, Green
& Co. 1910. pp. xxxvii+727.

This is an excellent book on China. Its title seems to indicate that it is only the first volume of the series on the subject on which the author has undertaken to write. The book contains many valuable commercial statistics, numerous cross-references and ample foot-notes. It is well supplied with illustrative and referential materials. In addition, it has an elaborate table of contents, a chronology, a bibliography and an index. The documentary appendices, drawn chiefly from the British Foreign Office, "hitherto unpublished, throwing light on many important occurrences," is another desirable feature of the book.

The author's aim, as stated in the preface, is to compile a record of "events occurring on the selected scene, and during the selected period," and "to give the events * * * such relative importance as they deserve; to lay no undue stress on picturesque episodes." He says that some writers "have been handicapped by a strong desire to support" the Chinese side while others "have been chiefly concerned to show that their hero (heroes, principal actors) could do no wrong," but his task is to present a proportioned and consecutive history of the selected events. His intention has been to make a record of the origin and growth of the British foreign policy directed toward China, though he does not so openly express it himself. It is strange to see that Mr. Morse is silent or indifferent in regard to those writers who have taken the British and European side of the situation before him.

The sources of his history are practically *pro tanto* European, chiefly English of course, as his point of view, his historical interest has been English and incidentally European. But he found himself fortunate in that he has been able to use translations of the Chinese state documents published in the Chinese Repository which are, in his opinion, many, and he says that the search for the Chinese original records will give little further light on the subject. He certainly has courage. He seems to be confident that the adequacy of the sources he used, documentary and contemporary, representative of both sides, European and Chinese, especially the latter for the reasons mentioned later, will not and cannot be questioned. Nevertheless, it may be questioned eventually by those who wish to see a complete and impartial account of the events.

The book covers in 26 chapters the 26 years between 1834 and 1860,

averaging one chapter for one year. It has 640 pages of text and 52 pages of appendix in fine print. The Chronology covers six and a half pages, two of which are given to the "Early" period, dating from 1516 to 1834, a period of nearly three centuries. The first two chapters of the book deal with China's government and taxation. The third chapter treats of the "Early Foreign Relations." Chapters four to six inclusive, cover a period of 132 years from 1702 to 1834, presenting the questions of monopolies, jurisdiction and equality. After such an introduction of six chapters out of a total of twenty-six, the author then comes to the task assigned for the book. These twenty-six years to be treated are, if anything, an eventful period of wars. A glance over the table of contents will give us an idea of the character, sequence and proportion of his treatment.

The issues dealt with may be put into three groups: (1) four chapters, Nos. 1, 2, 17, 18, deal with extraneous matters, such as taxation, etc.; (2) eight chapters, Nos. 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 19, 20, 24, deal with incidental affairs, such as early intercourse, jurisdiction, etc.; (3) the remaining fourteen chapters treat of the principal events. Thus only about one-half of the entire chapters are devoted to the subject-matter proper. In reality, it will be found that history proper consists of even less than one-third of the entire book. Out of the large number of appendices, several of which are quite lengthy, few contain documents of importance. They are embodied in the work perhaps because they are "hitherto unpublished." But the author does not tell us whether he has published all the British documents of the events in existence "hitherto unpublished" or simply a selection of them. Many of the best recent books do not appear in his bibliography, *e. g.*, Broomhall, *The Chinese Empire*. Nor does the text show his knowledge of these useful works.

The proportion of the book is as follows:

(1) Duiescence and Opium, 2 chapters (7-8), 4 years (January 19, 1835-February 26, 1839); (2) First Opium War and Treaty of Nan-king, 3 chapters (9-11), 3 years (November 3, 1839-August 29, 1842); (3) The Mixed Period, 9 chapters (12-20), 14 years (April 13, 1843-July 2, 1857); (4) Second Opium War and Treaty of Tientsin, 4 chapters (21-24), 1 year (April 7, 1857-June, 1858); (5) Third Opium War and Treaty of Peking, 2 chapters (25-26), 1 year (June 25, 1859-October, 1860).

The introductory chapters are omitted in considering proportion. By

"the Mixed Period" is meant the author's mixed treatment, not mixed events of the period. It includes topics as Lin, Lorch, Taiping, Piracy, Diplomats, etc. Three war periods are still given prominence. Neglecting details, the treatment is well proportioned.

The sequence of Mr. Morse's narration and exposition is not commendable.

In the second place, there are too many foreign matters. Should the author have paid a little more attention to unity and singleness of purpose he would undoubtedly have sifted them and eliminated a large part of them. As it is, the advantages of his clear and fascinating style are greatly sacrificed by the disadvantages of his discursive and loose presentation. Perhaps he did it merely for the sake of those readers who are not sufficiently conversant with Chinese affairs — for popularity.

Thirdly, the title is an unfortunate one. The book presents by no means the "International Relations of the Chinese Empire," but the Chinese relations of Great Britain, with Europe and America in the background. An impartial and conscientious historian will not take such a habitual and dogmatic attitude. There is some probability that he may adopt the Chinese point of view, China being the host in all these international relations, hospitalities and hostilities. Most probably he will take the position of an impartial spectator, reporter or judge, as he chooses. The present writer appreciates the difficulty for a national to take the delicate and idealistic view of a cosmopolitan in this age of nationalism and materialism. But Mr. Morse takes not only a British point of view, but a particular British policy and makes it his platform or creed. In fine, history in the hand of Mr. Morse lamentably becomes the servant of a party platform. History becomes but a means to an end.

Fourthly, it is obvious that his choice of sources is purely arbitrary. At the present stage of historical evolution, it is impractical and irrational to criticise one's method of handling and interpreting things. Every historian has a way of his own. Every one writes in the way he sees fit. Still his assertion that Chinese sources and materials will be of little or no use to the historian, and that he had better save his time by ignoring them is unwarranted. China is an historical nation in that she loves history and has a rich and voluminous written history of the four thousand years of her experience. On this particular subject, she might have inadvertently neglected her work very considerably compared with her other lines of historical activity, but

she still has international materials in her possessions and will gladly reward those who have the patience to search and dig. For instance, we should like to be told why Mr. Morse is silent or indifferent to the *Wai Chiao Pao*, a semi-popular Chinese diplomatic weekly which gives something of value even on this early period, though incidentally and niggardly. It will not due to overlook her own sense of difficulties and deny her a due hearing. Again, Mr. Morse is not the first and only writer who is guilty of this ignorance of and indifference to China's real thoughts and feelings. In spite of his weakness, the writer is glad to say that Mr. Morse as a foreigner has shown under the circumstances a remarkable degree of calm sympathy with the Chinese people.

Now let us examine some of the facts and opinions printed in the book. We will not try to point out his omissions. We will meet him upon his own ground. There will be nothing in the way of supplement. We only want to know whether or not some of his statements are correct. It will be seen that he lacks moderation, and that some of his statements need revision.

It is rather doubtful that often "the branches of one family holding its property in undivided commonalty" have "as its tipao the head of the family" (p. 20). He says that corruption in China, like the Tammany practices in America, existing "in a greater or less degree in all occidental countries, * * * is the ordinary practice * * * never punished, because it is a part of the system of government" (p. 27). But China certainly has written and unwritten laws in regard to corruption. Corrupt and illegal practices are positively prohibited and strictly punished when proved, at least in theory if not in practice. Such punishments are not infrequent. The phrase "the unregulated and uncontrolled discretion of the collectors" needs qualification (p. 30), and "the tax collector, bent on taking as much as he can, and the taxpayer, determined to pay as little as possible," hardly means anything. "The amount in taels is converted into cash at 2600 to the tael, and converted back into taels at 1105" needs explanation. "Cases are common * * * at the rate of between 5000 and 6000, * * * over five times the statutory amount." Again, "the amount to be exacted is indeterminate, and forms the subject of a battle annually renewed between payer and receiver" (p. 31). Such statements are misleading and confusing, even if not exaggerated, and are calculated to shock even the ear of the phlegmatic Chinese. Why are taxes in China lower than any Western nation, Japan or India? A

native scholar recently says that taxation is least liable to corruption and easiest to be detected. The recent financial commissions have not deemed it necessary to attack particularly the corruption of taxation. There is some reason for it. The foreign merchants "were forbidden to go into the malodorous streets" (p. 72). He does not tell us why the Chinese wished it so. Is it a measure of necessity, prudence, caprice or malice, under the circumstances? Indeed, he condemns it and naively on theoretical grounds. Curious enough, in a passage quoted elsewhere, the voice of the Chinese can be overheard as to why she feels justified to take such a step which seems to her to be a necessity for peace (p. 130). Mr. Morse passes over it quietly and hurriedly without notice and comment. As to extraterritoriality, by silence and in general accordance with his approval of the British policy, he seems to say that it is right. But he writes, it is true that "the Chinese have no desire to screen their countrymen from punishment when guilty, but the inquiry must be carried on according to their own forms and usages" (p. 109). Yet he does not explain why this Chinese proposition is not right.

I may be pardoned for making an exception by criticising the serious omission of an early episode which is historically interesting and important, namely, that of Queen Elizabeth's communication to the Chinese Government, and of the minor Persian, Arabian and Jewish commercial intercourses, though upon a small scale, at a much earlier period than that with which he begins the third chapter. Without troubling himself to give reasons, he says, "the first of the Western maritime powers to open direct relations with the Chinese Empire was Portugal. * * * Rafael Perestrello voyaged to China in a native ship on a prospecting expedition" in 1516 (p. 41).

In the fourth chapter he criticises severely and perhaps justly the governmental restrictions and monopolistic tyranny of the foreign trade. But it is known that similar conditions existed in Europe during practically the same period. The European nations are of a common color and culture. They have had centuries of intercourse with each other. They are also but a single community knitted together by the warp of the Roman Empire and the woof of Christianity. But between China and the Occident there is little or no community of interest, and their international intercourse, so far, is but a mild beginning. If the facts of crushing and cruel burdens which the factory merchants of the Mediaeval Europe had to bear, were reported to China at that time, the people

could not understand why these traders should prefer home trade to foreign commerce, prefer extortions and tortures to peace and pleasures, and they simply could not believe such a barbarous factory system as a living thing. See *e. g.*, Day, *History of Commerce*. So much for his Introduction.

The main text consists of pages 118 to 617 inclusive, extraneous discussions included. It is questionable whether the word "Yi" ought to be translated into "Barbarian." In Chinese it simply means that it is but a name of the tribes living in the East who were in a barbarous stage at the time when the word came into use. But it does not necessarily mean barbarian. To all intents and purposes Yi means the same as Orientals, the Easterners, the New Yorkers, the Parisians, etc. Similar words are Wai Jin (outlandish persons), Yang Jin (Oceanics), Hung Mao Jin (red-haired men), etc. These words are different from Yia Jin (wild men), Fan Keu (barbarian strangers), etc. Mr. Morse seems to have made a mess of these various names. By translating these different names into one single English term, "barbarian," he has created confusion. The writer has reason to believe that different words must have appeared in the different passages quoted. See pages 111, "The barbarians are like beasts" (probably correctly translated); 126, "barbarian headman" and "outside barbarians;" 129, 130, "barbarian merchants," etc. By translating Yi into "barbarian," by phrasing and context, he has made the mouth of the Chinese look dirtier than it is. When the Chinese call the foreigners Yi or Yang Jin, they are not consciously and intentionally treating them as "barbarians." To-day the Chinese living at the different treaty ports have got acquainted with the foreigners and most of them no longer hold the contemptuous opinion of their culture and think prejudicially of their inferior civilization: they still continue to call them Yi, *e. g.*, at Shanghai their settlement is called by the Chinese "Yi settlement." But they cannot be justly accused of committing contempt and insult, because they do not mean it and do not do it. I, however, must say that I have not verified the said passages with the Chinese originals. But I recommend in the name of justice that Yi should be translated into something like the Easterners, or for substance, the Occidentals, instead of "Barbarians." Anyway, a strict rendering, or a transliteration, if you please, with parenthetical explanations, is necessary if misunderstanding and misrepresentations are to be avoided.

Mr. Morse does not seem to know intimately the "Chinese doctrine of

responsibility," much less its *raison d'être*. See pages 114, 137, 192, 280, 372, 610. The Chinese "would inevitably have substituted baseless charges and unsubstantiated rumor for investigation," for conviction! "Jedwood justice" is their "fair trial" (pp. 116, 248). This may be true enough. Nevertheless, it is an exaggeration. We find the same thing in the passage that the British plenipotentiaries are "acting as umpires or buffers" between China and their own nation (p. 370). He even goes as far as to say upon his sole responsibility that Hung Siu-Tsuen embellished "the harem with his eighty-eight consecrated wives and his unnumbered concubines" (p. 444).

Commenting upon the looting of the palace, he says, "Possibly a necessary act, possibly even a wise one," but he admits the fact that "there remained for many years in the minds of the Chinese * * * a vivid memory" of it.

"In time," he says, in conclusion, "the world, East and West, also recognized that the West had exercised great restraint and shown a wise moderation in reaping the fruits of victory, and that the restrictions imposed on Chinese sovereignty were only * * * indispensable * * * ; now as the result of three wars, the Chinese learned, and they accepted as their law, that, whereas formerly it was China which dictated the conditions under which international relations were to be maintained, now it was the Western nations which imposed their will on China" (p. 617).

Now let us dwell a moment upon the much debated question whether or not opium had anything to do with the wars of the period. Mr. Morse declares that "the opium trade was not the cause" of the wars and "it had no effect on the political or diplomatic action of the foreign governments." This is, as he says, the view of "the foreigners in general, with the English pushed into the forefront." But he also knows that "to the Chinese, opium was the only cause which could have led to the first war;" the Chinese Government, "with a just cause, expected fully the support of the Western world * * * with the knowledge of foreign nations which it then possessed." He cites the letter written by Lin to Victoria, in which "he betrayed no consciousness that there had ever been any other cause of dispute * * * the poison * * * opium was the sole subject treated." He interprets the whole situation, its causes, occasion and effects thus:

war had been hanging in the air; it came when it did because the Chinese had precipitated a crisis by a vigorous campaign against opium; but it was not

fought to uphold the trade in opium, though it was of great importance, and was the chief means to maintain a fair balance of exchange; it was only the beginning of a struggle which lasted for twenty years [?]. (pp. 253, 254, 539.)

Speculation in the causes of modern wars is nowadays a fashion among the learned. Cases of Religion v. European Wars, Taxation v. the Anglo-American War, Equal Freedom v. the French Revolution, Slavery v. American War, Opium v. Sino-European Wars, Manchuria v. the Russo-Japanese War, Peasantry v. the Russian Revolution and what not, remain to be settled. It is doubtful whether the speculative scholars will ever be able to catch "the real" in their tireless chase after "the causes." In the present case, on the one side, China holds that opium is the cause of the wars; on the other side, the nation concerned denies it entirely. Anyway, Mr. Morse can be assured of the success of his "occasion" theory. But he is not free from contradictions and inconsistencies. He first says, "it had no effect, etc.," and then adds, "it was only the beginning, etc." While he upholds the British view, yet he admits the opposite Chinese view too. He shows that the British merchants are "chiefly" and "greatly" interested in the opium trade while their government declares that she has no interest in it, but she cannot help China to stop it and that China is to be responsible for her ill feelings caused by the process of stopping it. It is true that China has been persistent, obstinate and foolhardy in sticking to her belief that Great Britain imposed opium upon her by force. Somebody may stuff poison in her throat, but she has not to swallow it. It is also true that the diplomatic declaration of the British Government is susceptible of insincerity.

One is naturally interested in the view-point or the policy which the author upholds in the book and desires to know just what it is. It is the so-called aggressive policy of an unusual strength. Let us hear Lord Palmerston, the father of the policy, in his own words: "The British Government * * * does not choose to trust to negotiation * * * but has sent out a naval and military force with orders to begin at once to take the measures necessary for attaining the object in view" — the satisfaction of British demands (p. 630, Letter to the British plenipotentiaries). Sir J. Bowring is more moderate, to make demands "by a display of a becoming naval armament to support diplomatic authority" (p. 686). In his answer to the above, Dr. P. Parker says, "The absolute necessity of the display of a becoming naval armament to support diplomatic authority has never for a moment been lost sight of" (p. 689).

Mr. Bruce found that they had "acquired moral support from the presence of our flags there" (p. 577). Might is not only right, but also makes things right. Mr. Morse's history is a history of this policy, *par excellence*. The book ends with the author's clear-cut and convincing message to China. Now the Powers have "finally brought you to your knees." If you have sense enough, you must as you ought to recognize that (1) "diplomacy is of no avail unless supported by armed force, (2) only the mailed fist can guard your house" (p. 617).

The drift of events clearly indicates, indeed, the course of nature dictates that China whether she wills it or not must come to face the international situation some day, and that commerce and Christianity must sooner or later enter China and stay there. But as a matter of fact it happened that these two giants were pushed in by force at the time of the opium excitement. They have thus far maintained and extended their positions respectively and commonly in China more or less by fear. Both merchants and missionaries rely on the moral and physical "support" of their "flags" there, and both use it in their own interests as far as they can. It is easy to imagine what is, under the circumstances, the state of the Chinese mind, or how their minds react and reflect upon the situation according to their natural consciousness and peculiar habits. As Mr. Morse upholds the British aggressive policy, so the present writer at this point does not pretend entirely to inhibit nor conceal his Chinese bias, which is, in the light of his present knowledge and experience, slight.

To be just, the author is not without sympathy with the Chinese people; he has shrewd insight into the international situation; and he has treated the subject as fairly and as well as he can, under the circumstances. The twenty-fourth section of the sixth chapter of the book shows his insight and fairness. Several questions are raised. What were the conditions existing then and there? How can a nation insist on her right to trade? How far can restrictions on trade go? How far were merchants to be respected by the nation which objected to the trade? Could a nation which had never received envoys, except as tribute bearers, be required to accept them as sent from her equals? How far can Europe require China to accept the international canons which are different from her own? He, however, does not raise the question, How far can China require Europe to observe her international codes? Mr. Morse says that these questions will be differently answered according as they are speculative or diplomatic questions. But

answers will be different not only according as they are philosophical or political, but also as Sinic (Chinese) or Roman (European). Of course, the time for the assertion of the Chinese international (not tributary) practices or theories is very remote, or the time may never come. The codes, not the creed, of the Chinese international law are very crude now on account of the lack of her need for it in the past by her isolated position. But it might develop much more rapidly from now on its juvenile, flexible and free character than the European codes so that in the course of time the former might outrun and supersede the latter by moral or physical conquest or compromise. Most probably China will give up her own and come over to cooperate with the West in developing the prevailing European codes. This speculation naturally looks like the visions of an insane mind in the eyes of those who are not Chinese.

Why this lengthy and tedious review? For several reasons. As already mentioned, there is a general inadequacy of good books and prepared readers on the subject. Some of the common-place issues are in reality complicated, as a part or parts of a machine taken apart and isolated may be simple enough to the machinist, but will be too simple or too complicated for the understanding of an otherwise intelligent person who is not sufficiently prepared to appreciate it. It treats a subject in which I have keen interest. But I have not had time to avail myself of the advantage offered by the Chinese materials. The subject is a very important one. The appearance of the book is timely. Its treatment is elaborate, *i. e.*, minute and diffuse. It is an unusually good book in English compared with others that I know of. But the relative importance of the subject, the comparative value of the book, and the complicated events of the situation are the chief reasons for the length of the review.

On the whole, it is safe to say that Mr. Morse's book is the best of the kind written on the subject, at least in English. It may not be too much to say that it will hold the first and foremost place in its class for a long time to come. The author has performed the task exceedingly well, and certainly he is to be congratulated. He has made careful studies and acquired a shrewd insight. As a systematic treatise upon a broad basis, and for the documents and other matters which are published therein for the first time, the book is a contribution to the world upon an important subject. It deserves the attention of the reading public of all nationals who are interested in the subject.

T. N. Woo.